DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 225 EC 100 800

AUTHOR Mazzullo, Mariann C.
TITLE The Mandate: To Identify Children with Handicapping Conditions.
PUB DATE Apr 77
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (55th, Atlanta, Georgia, April 11-15, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Handicapped Children; *Identification; *Program Descriptions; School Districts; *State Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Child Find; *New York

ABSTRACT

Reviewed are 10 Child Find projects to locate possibly handicapped children as mandated by Public Law 94-142 with particular emphasis on Child Find activities in New York State. Noted are efforts of Colorado, and Idaho including public awareness campaigns, and screening programs. It is reported that more than 30 projects have been funded in New York to locate, identify, and evaluate handicapped children. New York projects fall into three categories: projects directed toward identifying preschool handicapped children, projects geared toward identifying the zero through 21-year-old unserved and unidentified handicapped person, and projects that incorporated a programmatic effort that was a direct outgrowth of the Child Find activities. Projects reviewed are conducted by the following New York educational agencies: Mamaroneck Union Free School District, Bellmore Union Free School District, Buffalo Public Schools, Putnam/Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Steuben/Allegheny Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Sullivan County Board of Cooperative Educational Services, and Rensselaer Columbia County Board of Cooperative Educational Services. (DB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED139225

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE MANDATE: TO IDENTIFY CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

by

Mariann C. Mazzullo

A Paper Presented at Countil for Exceptional Children 55th International Convention

Atlanta, Georgia

April 15, 1977

EC 100 800

The Mandate: To Identify Children With Handicapping Conditions

With the advent of Public Law 93-380 and the greater impact of Public Law 94-142, school districts have been given a mandate to locate, identify, evaluate and program for children with handicapping conditions from birth through 21 years of age.

Federal legislation, specifically Public Law 93-380, the Education Amendments of 1974, required state departments of education to develop plans to locate, identify, evaluate and diagnose all children with handicapping conditions in order to receive funding for services related to the special education of these children. With the signing of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, the mandate to locate, identify, evaluate and program for children with handicapping conditions was re-emphasized with special attention given to procedural safeguards such as due process, the right of a parent to appeal a placement decision, annual review of all handicapped children by a Committee on the Handicapped including parent representation, a mandate of an individual educational plan for each handicapped child, non-discriminatory testing and evaluation procedures. As an outgrowth of this law, local school districts would be granted federal funds to provide some of the excess costs in the education of all handicapped children. Public Law 94-142 mandates that by September 1, 1978 all handicapped children, age three through 18, must have available to them a free and appropriate public education and that by September 1, 1980 all handicapped children three through 21, must have available to them a free and appropriate public education. The three to five year old age range is applicable in only those states where legislation is not contrary.

In an effort to comply with this recent legislation to locate, identify, evaluate and serve all children with handicapping conditions, child find projects have been undertaken throughout the United States. A review of

projects that were ongoing prior to March, 1975 can be found in Proceedings From the Child Find Conference, United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1975. It is the intention of the author of this paper to review a number of child find projects that are currently in operation in the United States with significant emphasis on projects ongoing and sponsored by the New York State Education Department.

The State of Colorado has supported the national child find mandate through early screening relative to the identification of infectious and chronic diseases and medical and psychological processes which hinder school readiness. The concept of screening in Colorado has its roots in public health medicine. Using the Denver Developmental Screening, non-professional and professional screening aides have screened large numbers of pre-school children in Denver. Active child find projects are currently underway in Colorado.

Other states are also meeting the challenge of child find. In 1972, Idaho State Legislature mandated a needs assessment to determine the numbers of exceptional children residing within the state. It was found at the time of the study that only 18 percent of projected numbers were being served. The Idaho Exceptional Child Study followed in which field researchers attempted to locate exceptional children not receiving an education. When school and service agency personnel as well as parents were asked to report unserved exceptional children, a total of nine children from all 60 participating school districts were located in a five-month period. The need for an active child find awareness campaign was evident. Posters, information sheets and manuals were among the dissemination tools used to find unserved children. A workshop was held in April, 1974 to train the five professionals who were to undertake this project. May, 1974 was

declared by Governor Andrus as Idaho Child Find Month which launched the statewide effort to locate and identify children out of school. Mass media, TV, radio and newspapers, participated in the statewide effort. A 24-hour, toll-free telephone service was established during May, 1974 for reporting out-of-school children. Other child find activities included: information sheets stuffed into bank statements reaching approximately 85,000 families; grocery sack stuffers reached approximately 110,000 families; posters and announcements in local businesses and doctors' offices; more than 200 volunteers were mobilized to help with the child find effort; civic groups were sent packets of information; and, all agency personnel serving handicapped children were contacted. From this campaign, it was found that reasons for being out of school included: 34 percent of those reported out-of-school were handicapped; 32 percent were drop-outs; eight percent were expelled from school due to disciplinary reasons; six percent were results of parent neglect; and, six percent were results of religious conflict. It is interesting to note that handicapping conditions accounted for the most frequent reason for being out of school. If one were to examine the drop-out population for handicapping conditions, it is reasonable to expect that a high percentage of these youngsters were also handicapped and may not have been receiving appropriate educational services possibly causing the youngsters to drop out of school.

Follow-up activities to this endeavor include ongoing child find activities. In Idaho, public information and search efforts are major components of child find activity leading to initial identification of handicapped children.

There has been a major effort in New York State to formalize the Child Find movement with increased funding in this area from the Office of Children with Handicapping Conditions. Under the auspices of The Special Education Instructional Material Center, more than 30 projects were funded in Fiscal

Year 1976 whose primary objective was to locate, identify, and evaluate handicapped children who were not receiving any educational services. From these projects, more than 20 projects were funded in Fiscal Year 1977 in New York State which sought to provide program placements for these newly found children with handicapping conditions.

The Child Search effort took on many forms, all of which were directed toward the location, identification, and evaluation of unserved handicapped children. Some projects had secondary objectives which were addressed also by project staff. Several projects which are representative of the Child Find movement in New York State shall be reviewed in this paper. Information regarding these projects was obtained by this investigator from project participants and New York State Education Department personnel.

The projects to be reviewed fall into three major areas: (1) projects directed toward identifying pre-school handicapped children; (2) projects geared toward identifying the zero through 21 year old unserved and unidentified handicapped person; and (3) projects that incorporated a programmatic effort that was a direct outgrowth of the Child-Find activities.

The pre-school identification projects to be reviewed include projects conducted by the following local educational agencies: Mamaroneck Union Free School District, Bellmore Union Free School District, Buffalo Public Schools, and Putnam/Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services. The objectives of these programs correspond to the search for pre-school handicapped children. For instance, the Mamaroneck project sought to locate, identify, diagnose, and serve unserved and unidentified handicapped children, ages two and a half to five years old. The program was non-categorical relative to handicapping condition of the child. Activities included:

- presentation of program and its services to all community groups including all school related (public, private, parochial) groups, social service agencies, civic and medical groups.
- promotion articles in local newspapers and school letters announcing Child-Search Committee and program goals.
- use of census data on handicapped youngsters to locate part of population. For other child-find activities, consult: "Procedures Used in Child-Find Activities," paper given by Mariann C. Mazzullo at ASEIMC Child-Find Workshop, sponsored by Rensselaer-Columbia BOCES, Albany, N.Y., February 12, 1976.
- identification of pre-school handicapped youngsters through screen of youngsters located by Child Search Committee on measures of intellectual and affective development.
- appropriate instructional program designed to strengthen weaknesses and insure the further development of strengths.
- 1:1 remedial tutoring in listening skills, expressive language skills, picture naming, vocabulary building, receptive language skills, reading and writing readiness, math concepts, body concepts as appropriate.
- individual and small group conferences on self-image and goals.
- conducting parent workshops on behavioral management.
- conducting parent workshops on language training, perceptual-motor training, reading and math readiness training, and building youngster's self-image.
- 1:1 parent counseling.
- home program outreach.

Evaluation strategies consisted of (a) frequency counts of handicapped children located, identified and served; (b) parent pre- and post-criterion referenced measures; (c) pre- and post-child competency criterion referenced measures; and (d) qualitative comments from parents, community, staff, and administration.

A child find project ongoing in Bellmore Union Free School Didstict sought to identify severely handicapped four-year-old children and, through a program of remediation, increase the readiness of these children for parti-

cipation in a regular kindergarten. Orientation of kindergarten teachers and parents toward the needs of these children played a major role in the project. This program provided a non-categorical setting for served children. Activities involved:

. kindergarten screening of all district four-year-olds;

. 4 day a week A.M. and P.M. program servicing a total of 51 children;

. 1 conference day per week: parents, teachers, staff;

. 15 children served through a home program.

Buffalo Public Schools conducted a screening using the Denver Developmental Screening Test of three to five year old children whose parents desired services for children with handicapping conditions. A diagnostic team approach was utilized to develop an in-depth diagnosis and recommendation for placement. Parents of these children participated in parent education training sessions conducted by professional team members. Activities included: setting up of a Screening Center; informational materials distributed to community agencies and school principals; press releases to major and neighborhood newspapers; contact with child-service agencies including nursery schools.

Putnam/Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services conducted child find activities directed toward the identification of three- and four-year-olds who were functioning significantly below age level expectancy in the areas of social-emotional behavior, language performance, motor ability, or cognitive development. Children were identified primarily on the basis of communication deficit or behavior disorder caused by environmental deprivation, sensory impairment, or neurological dysfunction. The population did not include children classified as trainable retarded or orthopedically handicapped.

7.

The program sought to provide:

. individually prescribed programs for each identified child relative to diagnosis using Piagetian theory and child pacing. Parent training was a component of this program.

Other child find projects in New York State sought to identify unserved and unidentified handicapped children from birth to 21 years of age. One of these projects was the Steuben/Allegheny Board of Cooperative Educational Services Child Find, Identification and Diagnosis Project directed by Dr. G. Susan Gray. Among the objectives of this program were: (1) to determine the number, location and diagnosis of children under 21 with handicapping conditions who were unserved; (2) to involve component school district staffs, administration, boards and parents in the study; (3) to involve other health, social services and educational agencies in the study; and (4) to develop recommendations which would be based on the results of the study suggesting a delivery system to meet the educational needs of the children identified.

The Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services, the agency which conducted Project S.A.S.H. (Seek and Serve the Handicapped) had the following objectives:

(1) to locate all unserved handicapped children 0-21 years in the Orleans-Niagara BOCES area so that they may receive appropriate service.

(2) to establish a ½ day pre-school program, ages 2-5, for newly identified handicapped children for which no program exists or is available.

(3) to provide parents of these newly identified children with an inservice education program.

The project staff also established a central registry service to record names of served and unserved handicapped persons, birth through 21 years of age. This central registry service included screening activities, data collection, interagency referral, public awareness program, and planning

input to community agencies to eliminate gaps in service.

Sullivan County Board of Cooperative Educational Services conducted a similar child search in its own region. Its activities included:

(a) establishment of an organized system to identify handicapped children ages 0-21 who were currently receiving no specialized services;

(b) establishment of a register of the above children;

(c) coordination of informational workshops and other activities throughout the Associate Center Service Area concerning "Child Find; and

(d) consultation with local school districts or BOCES in formulating Title VI-B proposals to meet the needs of unserved handicapped children, and to assist in the writing of these proposals.

The Rensselaer-Columbia County Board of Cooperative Educational Services Child Find project differed somewhat from those described above in that project staff sought to identify the local school district personnel for the purpose of identifying and locating youngsters with handicapping conditions not currently being served in educational programs within their districts rather than conduct the direct child find activities themselves as a major focus of the project. Other objectives included:

(1) to ensure the identification of community representatives currently assuming the responsibility for the identification and location of pre-school youngsters and drop-outs who may be eligible for handicapped education assistance;

(2) to make operational an organization of people identified in above objectives for the purpose of planning and implementing regional child find activities; and

(3) to ensure that individuals responsible for the identification and location of handicapped children not currently being served through educational programs develop these skills and techniques necessary for completing their function which are consistent with the statewide 'child find' philosophy, policy and goals.

9.

Their activities included:

(a) informing all appropriate agencies, school district personnel, parent groups, of the child find program, its basis and goals;

(b) serving as local distribution center for child find information identified through the statewide program;

(c) identifying the agencies, districts, who would be components of an on-going area-wide child find system and identifying the existing child find efforts and gaps or weaknesses in the effort in order to develop a model for coordinated area-wide child find effort where necessary;

(d) developing an on-going communication system among appropriate agencies in the area regarding child find activities; and

(e) serving as a consultant to BOCES, local districts, and other appropriate agencies to develop proposals for completing a child find system in the area and/or for direct instructional programs to meet the educational needs of those unserved children, ages 3-21, identified in the child find process.

As one can see from a description of the above projects, New York State is making a significant contribution to the national Child Find Effort not only in terms of identifying unserved handicapped children but also in model development for Child Find Activities. The effort in New York State is a continuous one: a statewide Child Find month is planned for the near future. The challenge to identify and serve the handicapped child in New York State is accepted with vigor and enthusiasm.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abstracts For Projects Funded Under Title VI-B Fiscal Year 1976, Office of Children with Handicapping Conditions, New York State, Albany, New York, March, 1977.

Child Find: Proceedings from a Conference, Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C., March, 1975.

Education of Handicapped Children: Status Report, School Year 1974-1975 and Midyear 1975-1976, Colorado State Department of Education, Denver, Colorado, December, 1975.

Mazzullo, Mariann C., Procedures Used in Child Find Activities, (paper presented at SEIMC Child-Find Workshop at Albany, New York), February, 1976.

Perspectives on Public Awareness, Office of Human Development, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C., 1976.